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REPORT OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL ON THE WORK OF ITS THIRTEENTH SESSION

Note by the Executive Director

The Executive Director circulates herewith, in provisional form, the report of the World Food Council on the work of its Thirteenth Session held in Beijing, People's Republic of China, from 8 to 11 June 1987. The report will be issued in final form as Supplement No. 19 to the Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second session (A/42/19).

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ABBREVIATIONS

EEC	European Economic Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFC	World Food Council
WFP	World Food Programme

PART ONE

MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Beijing Declaration of the World Food Council

We, the Ministers of the World Food Council convened in Beijing in June 1987,

- draw the attention of all peoples to the growing number of human lives lost to hunger and malnutrition, one of the worst scourges in the world.

- Thirteen years after the World Food Conference, although total food production has increased, the number of undernourished men, women and children in the world has risen.

This untenable situation has deep historical root causes and complex social and economic factors.

In the face of this disorder, which is affecting innocent human beings,

- we once again proclaim that access to food constitutes a human right which must be defended by governments, peoples and the international community,

- we affirm, in the light of the experience of a number of developing countries, that humanity can feed itself if it adopts the proper means,

- we proclaim that these means depend on the political will of governments and the international community to win the common battle against hunger,

- we acknowledge that the development of agricultural production requires a favourable international climate, and is contingent upon the convergence of financial, economic and social policies implemented by each country within the framework of the concept of national food strategies put forward by the international community.

- Moreover, we are convinced that agriculture represents a vital sector for establishing a social, economic and financial equilibrium in the developing countries,

- indeed, the debts incurred by many developing countries, especially the least developed countries, must not result in increased poverty for rural populations.

Therefore,

- we call upon those responsible for national economic adjustment programmes to give priority to the requirement of integrated rural development as they affect the living conditions of both rural and urban populations,

- we urge the developed countries and major financing bodies to take into consideration the great difficulties of developing countries to repay their debts and to set up the necessary financial instruments for national economic recovery,

- we urge those responsible for trade negotiations to re-establish a healthy and equitable exchange of agricultural products and to allow the fair participation of developing countries,

- we believe that governments and the international organizations must further encourage regional and South-South co-operation, particularly in support of food production, agro-industries, trade, and management and institution-building,

- we affirm that the support of the countries of the North for the peoples of the developing South remains essential,

- we recognize that peace and stability are essential for the development of agricultural production, and

we proclaim our intention to join together and, in our united strength and interest, eliminate the scourge of hunger forever.

Beijing, 11 June 1987

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We, the Ministers and Plenipotentiaries of the World Food Council, met in Beijing for the thirteenth session, from 8 to 11 June 1987. At the point mid-way between the 1974 World Food Conference and the turn of the century, we reviewed the global state of hunger and malnutrition and the impact of reduced economic activity, external debt and domestic adjustment programmes on food and hunger problems. We assessed the food-security and development implications of the international agricultural-trade situation and related domestic policies, discussed the strengthening of regional and South-South co-operation and examined selected activities of multilateral assistance agencies. Against this background, we reviewed the challenges that lie ahead, before the turn of the century, in addressing the increasingly complex problems of hunger and poverty and their implications for the Council's future work.

I. THE GLOBAL STATE OF HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION AND THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ON FOOD AND HUNGER PROBLEMS

2. The world is now feeding over one billion people more than at the time of the World Food Conference, and current global food supplies could adequately feed all the world's people - and many more. However, hunger and malnutrition persist throughout the world and the growth in the numbers of hungry people has accelerated in the 1980s. Growing hunger is in many cases not caused by the scarcity of food, but rather by lack of access to food.

3. Poverty, which is at the core of the hunger problem, has become both more widespread and more severe, as many countries struggle with growing economic difficulties and undertake economic stabilization and adjustment programmes. The combined effects of reduced economic activity, falling national incomes, net capital outflows, and stabilization and adjustment programmes have led in many countries to significant reductions in purchasing power, growing unemployment and rising food prices, sometimes aggravating inequality in income distribution. Large cuts in Government spending on food subsidies, primary health care and other developmentally important social programmes have caused further hardship for the poor. Already close to the absolute subsistence level as they are, many of the poorest households simply cannot survive a deterioration in their food and nutritional levels.

4. Some of the forces generating hunger are growing rapidly and will demand difficult policy choices. The parameters of population growth, potential entrance to the labour force, and rapid urbanization are set for the next two decades. Urban population growth particularly will pose challenges for employment generation. Moreover, rapid ecological deterioration threatens the very livelihood base of future generations.

5. The conclusion emerging from our review is clear. The world is moving away from the World Food Conference's central objective: the elimination of hunger and malnutrition. Only with fundamental policy change can hunger and poverty be eradicated. As the most fundamental change of all, the improvement of the human condition must be placed front and centre of economic development. Hunger is basically an economic problem and also has social aspects. Therefore, comprehensive economic and social measures are required for its eradication.

6. We urge all Governments and international assistance agencies to make the well-being of all people the central objective of development and to focus all development policies to pursue this end. We recommend that Governments redouble their food-strategy efforts, and request that the World Food Council secretariat intensify its efforts to facilitate North-South and South-South co-operation in support of national and regional food strategies. We also resolve to sharpen the focus on hunger-related poverty reduction in our future work.

7. We noted with interest the recommendations of the 11-12 May 1987 Consultation on The Impact of Economic Adjustment on People's Food Security and Nutritional Levels in Developing Countries, organized by the World Food Council secretariat in collaboration with UNICEF and ILO. These recommendations include some practical steps towards improved multilateral-agency co-operation in poverty-focused economic adjustment and call for a closer integration of food-security, nutrition and poverty objectives into the work of the World Bank Consultative Groups and UNDP Roundtables. We also noted the Consultation's discussions on a major programme, additional to current international assistance, to protect the food and nutritional levels of the poorest households during economic crisis and adjustment, making use of existing food surpluses.

II. THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL TRADE AND RELATED NATIONAL POLICIES ON FOOD AND DEVELOPMENT

8. In a broader context of interdependent economic growth and development, we reviewed the food-security aspects of international agricultural trade and related national policies. In doing so, we responded to the invitation to the World Food Council, made by the United Nations General Assembly at its 41st session, to assess, within its mandate, "the impact of the present agricultural trade situation in all its aspects and to maintain an active interest in the progress and outcome of multilateral negotiations on agricultural trade issues" (resolution 41/191).

9. Growing protectionism, the decline in commodity prices, the deterioration in terms of trade, and limited access to markets have had a negative impact on the situation of international agricultural trade, and impede the efforts of developing countries to overcome hunger and malnutrition.

10. An improved international environment facilitating economic growth and development is critically important to meeting the developing countries' food-security and poverty-reduction objectives. We welcome the recognition by the OECD Council of Ministers, meeting in Paris on 12 and 13 May 1987, that "developed countries must strive to ensure a better environment for developing countries' growth and exports" and that "the first and foremost contribution that the OECD countries can make to world prosperity is to foster vigorous economies in an open multilateral trading system". We note with satisfaction the OECD Ministers' statement on the need for responsive development, trade, debt and finance measures in their co-operation with developing countries, including improved market access, increased and more effective development assistance and reductions in the debt-servicing burden of the poorest countries. We also note with satisfaction that the EEC is reviewing its Common Agricultural Policy along these lines.

11. In the context of efforts to improve the international environment, we reiterate that the strengthening of peace and international security and the achievement of practical results in the field of disarmament are important factors in solving global socio-economic problems, including food problems. It was pointed out that food should not be used as a means of political or economic pressure. In this context, the relationship between the solution of world food problems, and the establishment of a New International Economic Order and the development of equally and mutually benefical international co-operation was noted.

12. We emphasize that there is a serious and deteriorating situation in world agricultural trade. Food and agricultural production and stocks have grown to record levels, although not in the countries which need them most. International demand has been dampened, partly because of increased production in importing countries and partly because of growing protectionism and economic difficultics in many countries. The income losses resulting from low food and agricultural prices, in some cases the lowest in 50 years, have been hard on exporters, particularly on developing countries dependent on export income from food and agricultural commodities.

13. Some importing countries have benefited from low world market prices in the short run, although in the current economic and financial circumstances of many developing countries, they have had to restrain food imports despite low prices. At the same time, the current world market situation has not encouraged domestic food-sector development in many developing countries whose economies depend on agriculture as the engine for economic growth.

14. From our point of view, the serious imbalances in world agricultural trade must be urgently addressed. Agricultural trade that is more predictable, balanced and stable can contribute to enhanced food security and economic development.

15. We are encouraged by the OECD Ministers' acknowledgement of the need for progressive and concerted agricultural policy change in developed countries and by their adoption of a set of broad principles to guide such policy reforms. We also welcome the OECD's recognition that excessive support policies entail an increasing world market distortion and severely damage the situation of many developing countries. In order to enhance prospects for the earliest possible progress in the GATT Uruguay Round as a whole, we strongly urge OECD countries to translate the political will demonstrated at the Paris meeting into action.

16. There have been some indications of change in policy in developed countries, in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Punta del Este and the OECD Communique. These are to be welcomed, but much more needs to be done, adapted to the circumstances of individual countries. It is most important to reinforce this change in a concerted, balanced and progressive manner.

17. There has been encouraging progress with domestic policy reform in support of the food and agricultural sector in many developing countries. Many countries in Asia have a long-standing record of effective policies and programmes supportive of the food sector. Many Latin American countries, despite the set-backs in the 1980s in the context of growing economic and financial difficulties, have tried to introduce readjustements in the agricultural sector. In more recent years, many African countries have intensified efforts to re-structure their agricultural economies. To sustain

these efforts, the African countries need stepped-up external assistance; the Thirteenth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in May 1986 recognized this need by adopting the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. We recognize that other developing countries also require stepped-up assistance to complement their self-help efforts.

18. It was considered that ways could be sought for the present large surpluses to be used as technical and financial assistance to accelerate the economic development of developing countries. The President and Executive Director of the World Food Council were invited to consider the possibility of promoting initiatives in this regard.

19. In order to solve the problems of world agricultural trade and to be effective, national policy reforms should go hand-in-hand with efforts to improve the international trade and economic environment. The Uruguay Round is an important opportunity to move towards the solution of agricultural trade problems within the multilateral framework of GATT. We see it as imperative that the Uruguay Round give special and differential treatment in agricultural trade to developing countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries.

III. REGIONAL CO-OPERATION AND SOUTH-SOUTH CO-OPERATION IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

20. Regional and South-South co-operation has been ongoing for some time and has yielded positive results, which must be amplified and generalized. We applaud the South-South co-operation efforts of the People's Republic of China, which is among the pioneering countries in this field. We welcome ongoing efforts in other countries to strengthen intra- and interregional co-operation. The Interregional Meeting on Regional Co-operation and South-South Co-operation in Food and Agriculture, held in Lome, Togo, in May this year, and the earlier Sub-Regional Meetings held simultaneously in Yaounde, Dakar and Lusaka, jointly organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Council (WFC) clearly indicate the will of developing countries to work more closely together. Co-operation in food and agriculture is a particularly promising entry point, because the economies of most low-income countries depend on agriculture as the engine for economic development.

21. Technical co-operation offers significant potential for more rapid and rational economic progress. As suggested at the Lome meeting, food production, institution-building, training and the enhancement of management capability, the development of agro-industries, and trade should be given priority attention. Advancement in these areas might best be achieved through a regional or sub-regional focus. There is a key role for national, sub-regional and regional institutions in the development of co-operation between African countries and with countries of other regions. At the same time, United Nations bodies and other international organizations with important experience in this field should step up support to both intra-regional and South-South initiatives, as suggested in the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, adopted by the Thirteenth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in May 1986.

22. Sustained production increases at the national and regional levels will require strengthened scientific and technological capacity. Agricultural research for technology improvement, crop and livestock protection and the

prevention of post-harvest losses, anti-desertification and soil and water conservation measures, and the building and sharing of agricultural production information are areas which should be given priority attention and where early and visible returns are likely.

23. There is an urgent need to promote improvement of scientific and technical institutions in many developing countries. Governments should endeavour to strengthen institutional mechanisms, in particular the national focal points dealing with technical and other collaborative activities.

24. The lack and inadequacy of trained manpower is a serious obstacle to management in almost all sectors of the economy in a great number of developing countries. National efforts to upgrade capability in the formulation and analysis of food policy and in the design, implementation and evaluation of agricultural programmes and projects would be considerably reinforced by the intra-regional and interregional exchange of knowledge.

25. Agro-industries represent an important area where both the public and private sector can play a decisive role in promoting manufacturing and production - machinery and tools and agricultural inputs, for example - and in the development of food processing.

26. The many common problems faced by most developing countries as a result of their deteriorating economic and trade situation, the burden of their debt, and the aid situation, and the effects of these on their development efforts make a strong case for co-operative efforts to improve their trade environment and increase their trade, particularly in food and agricultural products. The advancement of trade co-operation will require in some cases more adequate, and generally more compatible, infrastructure and legal, administrative and fiscal mechanisms. We re-emphasize that an important entry point in this regard could be the harmonization of national food policies, especially price and marketing policies. Mechanisms to encourage increased trade in agricultural products and inputs between developing countries should be broadened, to complement existing regional and co-operative arrangements.

27. In endorsing the recommendations from the Interregional Meeting in Lome, we emphasize that South-South co-operation should be further developed in such a way as to complement co-operative action with other countries and with international organizations.

28. We urge the Regional Development Banks, the Regional Economic Commissions and donor countries, in liaison with the World Food Council, to facilitate the practical arrangements to step up the financing of technical and economic co-operation between developing countries. We recommend in particular that greater attention be given to the expansion of tripartite arrangements through which developed countries help finance South-South co-operative action.

IV. SELECTED ACTIVITIES OF MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE AGENCIES IN RELATION TO HUNGER REDUCTION

29. We heard reports from FAO, WFP, IFAD and UNDP on the work that they were doing to help developing countries provide adequate levels of food security for their people. There were several calls for the fulfilment of commitments made and for additional resources, to permit the agencies to fulfil more adequately their mandates. We favoured more improved co-operation and

co-ordination among international and regional agencies and were generally encouraged by the examples provided by them.

30. We expressed general appreciation and encouragement for the work being undertaken by the agencies, and highlighted in particular:

(a) the continuing development of the Global Information and Early Warning System of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; and its feasibility study to assess the net benefits of increased aid-in-kind of farm inputs;

(b) the International Fund for Agricultural Development's Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification;

(c) the effective logistical and material support of the World Food Programme to improve food aid delivery in the African food emergency, together with its complementary information system that permits improved co-ordination and avoids waste.

31. The hope was expressed that the FAO study on aid-in-kind would seek to establish whether such aid would be truly additional and not another form of tied aid.

PART TWO

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL

CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. The thirteenth ministerial session of the World Food Council was held in Beijing, People's Republic of China, from 8 to 11 June 1987. It was opened by the President of the World Food Council, Mr. Henri Nallet. At the opening ceremony, a message from the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, was read. A statement was also delivered by the Acting Chinese Premier, Mr. Wan Li. (see Account of Proceedings under Chapter II).

A. Membership of the Council

2. At the time of the session, the Council consisted of the following 36 States: Antigua and Barbuda**, Argentina***, Australia**, Bangladesh**, Brazil*, Bulgaria*, Burundi***, Canada*, China*, Colombia,*** Cote d'Ivoire*, Cyprus**, Dominican Republic**, France***, German Democratic Republic**, Germany, Federal Republic of**, Guinea**, Honduras**, Hungary***, India***, Italy***, Japan***, Kenya*, Mali**, Mexico*, Pakistan***, Rwanda***, Somalia**, Sri Lanka*, Sweden***, Thailand*, Tunisia***, Turkey*, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics**, United States of America*, Zambia*.

* Term of office expires on 31 December 1987
** Term of office expires on 31 December 1988
*** Term of office expires on 31 December 1989

B. Attendance

3. The session was attended by the following member States of the Council: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Bangdalesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, China, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Cyprus, France, German Democratic Republic, Germany (Federal Republic of), Guinea, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan, Rwanda, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America and Zambia.

4. Observers from the following States non-Members of the Council were present: Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Cape Verde, Chile, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Greece, Holy See, Korea (Republic of), Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Sudan, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Yemen (People's Democratic Republic of), and Zimbabwe.

5. The following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were represented: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA), United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and International Labour Organisation (ILO).

6. Observers from the following intergovernmental organizations were present: Commonwealth Secretariat, European Economic Community (EEC) and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

7. Observers were also present from the following non-governmental organizations: International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

C. Officers

8. The following officers of the Council were present:

President: Mr. Henri Nallet (France)

Vice-Presidents: Dr. Ernesto Juan Figueras (Argentina)
Mr. Yovtcho Roussev (Bulgaria)
Mr. Gilles Laubhouet-Vally (Cote D'Ivoire)
Mr. Ibrahim Baluch (Pakistan)

D. Agenda

9. The Council adopted the following agenda (document WFC/1987/1) for the session:

1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda.
2. The global state of hunger and malnutrition and the impact of economic adjustment on food and hunger problems.
3. The impact of international agricultural trade and related national policies on food and development.
4. Regional co-operation and South-South co-operation in food and agriculture.
5. Selected activities of multilateral assistance agencies in relation to hunger reduction
6. Election of officers.
7. Future programme of the Council and other business
8. Report of the Council to the General Assembly.

E. Documentation

10. The documents before the session are listed in the annex to the present report.

CHAPTER II

ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

A. Opening Statements

11. At the start of the opening session, the President of the World Food Council, Mr. Henri Nallet, introduced and complimented Mr. Gerald I. Trant, the new Executive Director, who had assumed leadership of the World Food Council secretariat since its last session. He thanked the People's Republic of China for hosting the meeting and said that the session was convening at a crucial moment in the history of international economic relations. He pointed out that the long-awaited economic recovery in the industrialized countries had not yet come about, and that the existing economic conditions had created an agricultural trade crisis of serious proportions.

12. The crisis was marked by a collapse in the price of agricultural commodities. This in turn depressed the export earnings of developing countries and made it difficult or impossible for them to service their external debt. In such circumstances, the fight against hunger and malnutrition was a losing battle - a long and protracted struggle that eluded any quick solution.

13. Mr. Nallet congratulated China on having eliminated hunger and malnutrition from the bulk of its population, and expressed the hope that it would serve as an example to others.

14. Following his opening remarks, Mr. Nallet called on the Executive Director of the World Food Council to read a message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In his message, the Secretary-General recalled his recent visit to China, and thanked the Chinese Government for hosting the session, and for its continued firm support of the United Nations. He pointed out that the commitment of the World Food Council to the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition was as strong today as ever before. Despite a considerable increase in global food production, there were more hungry people now than there were at the time of the World Food Conference thirteen years ago. The eradication of hunger, like the eradication of poverty, was essentially a political question, not just a technological one. As such it remained a fitting subject for deliberation and action by the World Food Council, the ministerial political body created for that purpose within the United Nations system.

15. The Secretary-General observed that there was a growing gap between the industrialized countries which had an over-supply of food, and the developing countries which were facing hunger and starvation because they had neither the purchasing power to acquire available food, nor the inputs necessary to produce food themselves. The central task of the World Food Council in cooperation with the United Nations system was to recommend workable policies and programmes by which this gap could effectively be bridged.

16. The Secretary-General attributed the problem to market distortions which existed in both the industrialized North and in the South. He emphasized the need to correct these distortions through appropriate adjustment policies. In Africa, for example, policy adjustment was necessary to correct distortions due to consumer price subsidies and over-valued exchange rates; in the industrialized countries similar policy adjustment was required to correct distortions due to producer subsidies and agricultural protectionist practices. He recognized that correcting such distortions would not be easy, because of political opposition from vested interests such as farm lobbies in the industrialized countries which were fighting to retain producer subsidies, and urban dwellers in the developing countries who were struggling to retain consumer subsidies. The Secretary-General emphasized, however, that the World Food Council could not shy away from politically sensitive issues, like assessing the impact of adjustment policies on the nutritional status of the poor, or the effect of agricultural protection policies in the industrialized countries on the war against hunger and starvation in the developing countries.

17. In conclusion, the Secretary-General applauded China's success in increasing food production in recent years and expressed the hope that China could provide useful lessons for other regions of the world, particularly Africa, where an increase in food production remained a central development priority.

18. The Acting Chinese Premier, Mr. Wan Li, delivered a welcoming statement to the participants. He said that the world food problem had deep historical roots as well as social and economic causes. The explanation to the perplexing paradox of a few grain-producing developed countries amassing food surpluses while the majority of developing countries suffered from food shortages lay in the inequitable imbalance in North-South development. The ultimate solution of the world food problem lay in overall national economic and social advancement, in the establishment of an equitable and rational international economic order and in the maintenance of international peace and stability.

19. Mr. Wan Li emphasized that the world had the capacity to feed all its people. What was lacking, especially in the developing countries, were advanced agricultural techniques coupled with appropriate incentives to farmers, and equitable distribution policies. It was incumbent on the developed countries to assist the developing countries by transferring resources and technology to them on favourable terms, and allow trade and financial flows which can stimulate their development. He explained how China had always given paramount importance to agriculture and rural development, and offered incentives to farmers to produce adequate food while also exercising family planning to let population grow in step with the economy. He applauded the United Nations food agencies in their efforts in eradicating hunger and malnutrition and pledged China's continued support for them.

B. General Debate

1. The Global State of Hunger and Malnutrition and the Impact of Economic Adjustment on Food and Hunger Problems (WFC/1987/2 and WFC/1987/2/Add.1)

20. Ministers noted with concern that the world community was moving away from the 1974 World Food Conference objective of a world without hunger. The number of hungry people was growing in the face of record global surpluses (on average by 1.5 million people annually, between 1970 and 1980), which were causing disruption to the economies of both developed and developing countries. Hunger was growing in Asia, Africa and Latin America. While public attention had recently been focused on Africa because of the natural disasters there, the fact remained that today some 60 per cent of the hungry live in Asia, against 25 per cent in Africa, 10 per cent in Latin America and 5 per cent in the Middle East.

21. Ministers agreed that the most fundamental change of all that was needed if hunger was to be eliminated was policies and programmes which put the improvement of the human condition front and centre in economic development. Development policies must create employment in line with the rapidly growing labour force; eliminate poverty; integrate urban and rural areas through policies that halt rural migration; pursue responsible population policies compatible with the socio-cultural environment in which people live; and safeguard the earth's ecological resources. Increased national and international support for effective nutrition and health programmes for vulnerable groups should be encouraged.

22. In order to revive the global economy and facilitate resource transfers to the poor and hungry, it was necessary to find a feasible solution to the debt problem, to seek trade liberalization by all countries, and to strengthen the lending capacity of multilateral financing institutions. In addition, immediate action is needed to arrest the growth of the numbers of hungry people. This requires national measures to safeguard food security and nutritional levels, international support for financing domestic social policies in developing countries, and the right kind of policy advice from the international financing and development agencies to governments engaged in economic adjustment.

23. Ministers resolved that the collective determination of world leaders must be strengthened and brought to bear on the real needs and aspirations of the poor. The international community should lend full weight to governments and international development agencies in their efforts to design and implement poverty-focused policies and programmes.

24. Ministers recognized that the world food problem was complex in nature and its successful solution depended greatly on the improvement of international economic relations, the establishment of a new international economic order, and the development of equal and mutually beneficial international cooperation.

25. Planned and comprehensive development of the productive forces of developing countries, full mobilization of their indigenous resources, intensification of agricultural development and production of food on the basis of progressive reforms in the agricultural sector of the economy were among the main instruments for the elimination of hunger and malnutrition.

26. The Council believed that the strengthening of national and international peace and security, and successful progress towards disarmament were of prime importance for a lasting solution to world socio-economic problems, including food problems.

27. The view was reaffirmed that the planning and development of food and agricultural production should be closely related to the development of other areas of the economy and society. Food and agricultural policies were inherent elements of socio-economic development and could be successfully implemented only within that comprehensive context.

28. There was broad consensus that the development and mobilization of human resources in developing countries was of crucial importance for agricultural development. Ministers spoke up in favour of further improving general education and professional training, in particular of youth, women, and small and medium farmers. Moreover, a major prerequisite for eliminating hunger and malnutrition was respect for the right to work.

29. Some Ministers stressed the importance of the co-operative and public sectors for promoting food production and overcoming undernourishment. It was further reaffirmed that food aid and food trade must not be used as instruments for exercising political or economic pressure.

30. Some delegations emphasized the need to resolve political and economic and social conflicts which undermine efforts to solve the hunger problem. The international community was urged to intensify efforts to create a favourable climate conducive to the development of all countries. In this context delegations condemned the policy of destabilization pursued by the racist regime of South Africa against the economies of the States of Southern Africa.

31. Ministers agreed that the issues of economic adjustment were complex. However, there was a need to formulate national policy options for food-security-focused adjustment. The sober economic outlook for the years ahead suggested that many countries - in the North as well as South - would be obliged to adjust their economies. This would mean a combination of short and longer-term measures: immediate stabilization programmes addressing balance-of-payments and public-budget difficulties; medium-term policy adjustment to revive the economy and long overdue policy to correct deeply rooted distortions in the economy which have had adverse effects on both economic growth and the welfare of the people. The question was not whether to adjust but how.

32. Council ministers noted that findings of current analyses were inconclusive as to whether the deterioration in low-income people's food security and nutritional status were a result of adjustment programmes or economic crisis. It seemed that low income countries would be able to successfully undertake economic adjustment only if the trends of declining or negative capital flows were reversed. What was needed was a revival of economic growth, more effective economic and monetary policies of industrialized countries, and higher and more stable prices for developing-country exports.

33. Ministers underscored the importance of tailoring adjustment policies to the specific needs of individual countries. It was noted that successful adjustment in some countries had several elements in common such as: growth-oriented macro-economic policies to increase and sustain output and employment levels; specific policies to ensure priority allocation of scarce resources; re-orientation of government expenditure and social services towards low-cost high coverage measures and effective targeting to the poor; and compensatory programmes and monitoring of food security and nutrition levels of at-risk populations, including the use of nutrition surveillance as a development planning tool.

34. Participants recognized that protection of food and nutrition needs were a key element in the objectives of adjustment. International support to governments in the assessment of adjustment programmes, training, policy-making, nutrition, poverty-elimination, and food-security deserved to be given priority in the adjustment agenda.

35. Most Ministers expressed concern at the deterioration of the food situation and the stagnation in production, particularly in Africa. In the case of Africa, it was important that increased food production retained central priority. Delegates felt that there was need for sound and well balanced social and macro-economic policies, which also took account of the deterioration of the environment. Firm steps needed to be taken to implement the food strategies advocated by the World Food Council, giving strategic priority to food production.

36. A number of obstacles to the elimination of hunger were enumerated: inadequate domestic production, insufficient foreign exchange earnings; lack of transport facilities, decline in development assistance for food production, etc. Above all, poverty was repeatedly emphasized as the root cause of hunger and malnutrition. Some delegates noted a number of imbalances such as large internal budget deficits, trade surpluses, an abrupt upsurge of protectionism; huge imbalances in the world agricultural economy and an imbalance in the economic and agricultural policies of developing countries. Urgent corrective action was necessary and should be taken by all countries in concert. The World Food Council should strive to mobilize the necessary political will, and suggest practical approaches which are both constructive and politically acceptable.

37. A number of delegations spoke on the issue of economic adjustment, stressing the need for adjustment "with a human face". Other delegates pointed out that the issue of economic adjustment was not sufficiently well understood and required further study. What was clear was that developing countries needed resources, sometimes in the form of food aid, to tide them over during the adjustment process since the price of economic adjustment in the short run can be politically and economically untenable.

38. The inadequacy or reversal of resource flows to developing countries seriously hampered efforts toward the elimination of hunger and malnutrition as well as the implementation of economic adjustment measures. Ministers repeatedly urged the international community to increase resource flows to developing countries, and called in particular for increased resources for the next replenishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development. They also urged developing countries to formulate, with international support, sound and comprehensive development packages that would incorporate health, education, extension and training and also put more emphasis on the role of women in food production.

39. One delegation from a developed country outlined its initiative for increased aid to developing countries' agriculture linked with an improvement of the international trade situation.

2. The Impact of International Agricultural Trade and Related National Policies on Food and Development (WFC/1987/3)

40. The subject of agricultural trade was discussed at considerable length. Ministers recalled that the General Assembly by Resolution 41/191 had invited the Council to assess the impact of the present agricultural trade situation in all its aspects and to follow the progress of multilateral negotiations in agricultural trade. During the session, Ministers took the matter extremely seriously, convinced that the international agricultural trade situation constituted a grave obstacle to the fight against hunger and malnutrition in the developing countries, and was also damaging the economies of the developed countries themselves.

41. In their broad survey of the situation, Ministers noted that food production and stocks had reached record levels, but not in the countries that needed them most. At the same time, demand had either slackened or fallen off, international markets destabilized, and prices of foodstuffs had fallen, in some cases, to their lowest level since the Great Depression. Primary exporters in the developing countries had been particularly hard hit by the resulting foreign exchange losses, which had created economic and social hardship, and compromised both their food security and their development prospects.

42. The situation was typically characterized as a case of "trade policy failure" which was fraught with dire consequences for humanity as a whole, should corrective timely action fail to be taken. Never was world leadership more badly needed to deal with a very difficult situation. Ministers affirmed that although the World Food Council was not a trade policy or trade negotiating forum, it must assert strong leadership and make its voice heard to all those who had the problem of solving hunger and eliminating poverty seriously at heart.

43. There was general agreement that the nature and causes of the agricultural trade crisis were well understood and that solving it was possible. But this required concerted multilateral action, along the lines suggested for consideration by the World Food Council's secretariat. Action by one country alone or a single group of countries was not enough. It was in the interest of all countries, developed and developing, to take necessary steps to remove all forms of artificial obstacles to trade in agricultural products, and to ensure that whatever measures were legitimately adopted in support of their farmers did not run counter to the overriding objective of trade liberalization.

44. Ministers generally recognized that in order to defuse some of the tensions in food and agriculture and achieve a reasonable measure of food security and agricultural revitalization, a combination of measures was needed: appropriate policy adjustment in both the developed and the developing countries; creation of a more favourable economic environment; resolution of the debt problem; reduction of protectionism, and a fruitful outcome of the multilateral trade negotiations of the Uruguay Round. The link between agricultural trade, domestic agricultural policies and food security needed to be better understood. Policy adjustments that allowed greater responsiveness to market forces and encouraged farmers to respond to incentives could help to reduce instability in commodity markets in general and food supplies in particular. Much greater harmony and flexibility had also to be developed between the agricultural policies of the large agricultural exporting and importing countries. Significant gains could result from freer trade only if all countries worked together and made the necessary policy changes. Trade liberalization in the presence of existing agricultural policies and food surpluses would be of doubtful benefit.

45. Ministers had high hopes for the current round of GATT negotiations - and referred particularly to the OECD ministerial meeting of May 1987 which endorsed the principles of standstill and roll-back. Countries were urged to desist from any international action or domestic policy which could jeopardize the success of the multilateral trade negotiations.

46. Ministers agreed that the World Food Council should make a Beijing Declaration which would include a strong responsible statement on the imperative of addressing agricultural trade issues as a necessary step towards solving the problem of hunger and poverty in the world today. They also considered that the multilateral trade negotiations of the Uruguay Round offered an important opportunity to build a better multilateral trading system, which would restore the balance between global production and demand and reinforce trade links between developing and developed countries. Under it, it ought to be possible to find means for the orderly disposal of current stocks in ways which would be conducive both to the attainment of food security objectives of the developing countries and the introduction of desirable policy reforms in agriculture, without disrupting international markets.

3. Regional Co-operation and South-South Co-operation in Food and Agriculture (WFC/1987/4 and Add.1)

47. In keeping with General Assembly resolution 41/191, which inter alia requested the World Food Council to assist in accelerating the promotion of regional and subregional food strategies by stimulating vigorous follow-up action with all parties concerned in order to implement the conclusion and recommendations reached at its own regional and interregional consultations, Ministers devoted considerable attention to ways of strengthening South-South co-operation in the food and agriculture sector. They were pleased to note that the World Food Council jointly with the United Nations Development Programme and with the assistance of other concerned agencies, had organized three consultations at the sub-regional level with African countries in three different capitals - Lusaka, Yaounde and Dakar - from 13 to 16 April 1987, and another at the interregional level with a selected number of African, Asian and Latin American countries held in Lome, Togo, from 11 to 14 May 1987, to consider ways and means of speeding up South-South co-operation in food and agriculture.

48. Ministers stressed that South-South co-operation was no longer just a rhetorical slogan. It was an idea whose time had come, one with real development potential. Albeit gradually, economic and technical cooperation among developing countries (ECDC and TCDC) were becoming tangible realities, and participants cited many examples of successful co-operation in the food and agricultural sector. There was growing awareness among developing countries of the need to develop and strengthen co-operation among themselves if their dependence on the North was to be reduced and collective self-reliance achieved.

49. Ministers affirmed, however, that South-South co-operation still had a long way to go before its potential could be fully realized. There were several problems to be surmounted. Among them were geographical, historical and cultural disparities among third world countries; the continued dependence of third world countries on the North for most of the goods, technology and commodities they need for their economic and social development; and their dependence on the North for financial and credit facilities for trade and investments. The lack of a South-South economic front, or of an economic community of the South, was an important source of weakness in its negotiations with the North, which was itself a well-organized economic community.

50. Ministers affirmed their belief that developing countries should remain the prime movers in the promotion of South-South co-operation. The role of the United Nations system must continue to be catalytic and supportive of South-South initiatives by developing countries themselves, and not a substitute for them. The Ministerial Session also called on the developed countries and the international organizations, in their pursuit of international development strategies, to support South-South co-operation, and to regard it as an appropriate complementary activity. South-South co-operation was a complementary mechanism which could lead to better North-South co-operation, and not a "platform" for confrontation with the developed countries.

51. Ministers were impressed by the World Food Council's programme to promote Regional and South-South co-operation in food and agriculture. They considered it as part of the effort to establish a new international economic order.

52. Ministers observed that in recent years an increasing number of international organizations as well as developing countries, especially in Africa, have made valuable contributions to promoting South-South co-operation, with gratifying results. The United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development for 1986-1990 adopted last year by the thirteenth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly is an excellent manifestation of these efforts.

53. The proposals and recommendations of the African sub-regional meetings held in Lusaka, Yaounde, and Dakar respectively in April 1987, and the consequent interregional consultation held in Lome, Togo in May 1987 were endorsed by the Ministers. They pointed out that the institutional framework at the national, regional, subregional international levels recommended by the Lome meeting, constituted an integrated and organic whole. It showed that South-South co-operation was not a matter for the developing countries alone but also called for the support of the international community.

54. Ministers supported the four priority areas for South-South co-operation identified in the report of the Lome meeting. They expressed willingness to continue their efforts to promote South-South co-operation through consultative services and technical assistance, participation in project feasibility studies, and provision of production and management services in the fields of planting, cultivation, crop protection, rural energy, sand-fixation, and veterinary services. They also supported staff training for the preparation, formulation and implementation of food and agricultural policies and projects.

55. Ministers were pleased to note that increased use was being made of technical cooperation between developing countries (TCDC). An increasing number of developing countries were making bigger allocations in their national budgets for the promotion of TCDC projects. This showed that the governments concerned were willing to assume primary responsibility for TCDC and to give it priority in their development efforts.

56. The strengthened role of TCDC was also reflected in many countries' desire to devote a higher share of the country and inter-country indicative planning figures (IPFs) within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to projects with TCDC components. There were clear indications that an increasing number of countries were giving higher priority to TCDC-components in projects. Ministers were confident that this trend would continue, with UNDP support.

57. It was emphasized that there was need to further strengthen mutual support and co-ordination in the international community. It was hoped that developed countries, bearing in mind the common objective of eliminating hunger and malnutrition, would adopt practical measures and endeavour to create an economic environment favourable to the development of the developing countries. It was also expected that they would increase financial and technical assistance to developing countries for their agricultural development. Thus assistance by the North would serve to strengthen South-South co-operation.

58. Some Ministers of developed countries stressed that there was no need to set aside special funds for TCDC or to institute new organizational arrangements. In view of the great importance of co-operation among developing countries, it is important that TCDC be incorporated into the regular bilateral and multilateral technical and financial co-operation. The United Nations Development Programme and the specialized agencies should scrutinize on-going and further projects under the aspects of TCDC and, if necessary, supplement or shift such projects.

59. Ministers commended the establishment of appropriate mechanisms in regional and subregional institutions to co-ordinate and improve information distribution. Information exchange can be a vital development link transcending national, sub-regional, regional and interregional levels and is essential to development policy-making as well as to determining agriculture sector priorities at all levels. They encouraged the World Food Council secretariat to continue its co-ordination efforts with other United Nations agencies and multilateral organizations and strongly supported increased interregional trade and South-South investment activities. They also agreed that the private sector in developing countries can do much to enhance the development process in both investment and trade.

4. Selected Activities of Multilateral Assistance Agencies concerning hunger and malnutrition reduction (Document WFC/1987/5)

60. The President invited the representatives of four multilateral organizations -- namely, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - to brief the Council on their current activities concerning the reduction of hunger and malnutrition. The occasion provided an opportunity not only for Ministers of the Council to receive a first-hand account from the leading food and agriculture agencies, including the major multilateral donor, but also for those agencies themselves to reaffirm the mutual complementarity of their activities with those of the Council, to the satisfaction of everyone present.

61. Ministers recalled that one of the responsibilities of the World Food Council was to establish programmes for the co-ordination of relevant United Nations bodies and agencies with respect to their activities in the food sector. For this purpose, the Council had yet to develop an effective co-ordination mechanism.

62. As a first step towards inter-agency co-ordination, the Council needed first-hand knowledge of the activities of concerned multilateral assistance agencies. The presentation of the agencies' representatives and the secretariat paper on the activities of selected multilateral assistance agencies in the field of hunger and malnutrition reduction, provided Ministers with a useful glimpse at relevent current activities, and an opportunity to discuss their co-ordination.

63. Among the agencies and programmes reviewed were: FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System; IFAD's Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification; WFP's Assistance Programme for Major Emergencies.

64. Ministers noted with satisfaction the positive contribution of FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System, which monitors the production and supply position and prospects of staple food crops particularly cereals, in various countries. Some 100 governments and international agencies and several non-governmental organizations presently participate in the scheme. The network of reports and information gathering involving governments, field agencies and special missions, was a fine example of inter-agency collaboration, which should be further strengthened.

65. As for the IFAD's Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification, Ministers appreciated the need for restoration and improvement of productive capability of smallholders, and for building relevant institutional support with special protection for vulnerable rural populations. Under the IFAD programme, specific attention was given to the supply and utilization of primary inputs to small-scale producers including fertilizers, water, seeds, tools and storage; development of staple rural food crops, conservation-based agricultural development, rehabilitation and expansion of small-scale irrigation and water conservation schemes, and the strengthening of institutional and policy framework appropriate to smallholder farmers. The programme was also designed to be flexible and its implementation could be modified in the light of experience.

66. As regards the WFP's handling of major food emergencies, Ministers observed that the massive international response to the African food crisis, in which about 6 million tons of food was mobilized in 1985 alone, had underlined two types of the WFP's effective actions. The first was the World Food Programme's capacity for logistical assistance. The second was the development by the WFP of an effective computerized information system on food aid pledges and port movements, which made possible the effective and orderly co-ordination of food aid and shipment schedules by donors.

67. Of particular interest were some instances of inter-agency cooperative approaches which were briefly reviewd, such as WFP's Food Aid for Structural and Sector Adjustment which is being developed in co-operation with the World Bank; the Food and Nutrition Surveillance Systems being developed jointly by FAO, WHO and UNICEF; and the Joint Activities for Identification and Preparation of Projects for Food production in Developing Countries which is being undertaken jointly by FAO and IFAD under a cost-sharing arrangement.

68. Ministers recognized that these multilateral agency programmes - and the list is not exhaustive - had the potential to make a significant contribution to the reduction of hunger and malnutrition, and emphasized the need for close collaboration, monitoring and co-ordination of effort by all the agencies of the United Nations system, and the role that the World Food Council was expected to play.

69. The debate also underscored the fact that international agencies have contributed greatly to increased public awareness of development problems, to the mobilization of financial and human resources, and the provision of qualified personnel and equipment. Mention was made of the fact that international non-governmental organizations acted as conduits for the diffusion of information on improved farming techniques and better use of available food and productive resources.

70. Some Ministers pointed out that governing bodies of some United Nations agencies such as the WFP's Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes would continue to look to the World Food Council for policy guidance. In addition, the Council must continue to fulfil the need for co-ordination, and mobilization of political support for food and food-related policies and programmes within the United Nations system.

5. Future Programme of the Council and Other Business (Document WFC/1987/10)

71. To discuss this item, the Council met in closed session. The Executive Director brought to the attention of the Council three issues which required its decision and guidance. First, there was a request before the World Food Council to submit to a Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council, within 30 days of this session, its views and proposals on achieving the objectives of the on-going in-depth study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields. Second, the Council was required to submit to the United Nations General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, its Draft Medium-Term Plan for 1990-1995. Third, the Executive Director was seeking the Council's guidance for the more immediate tasks of the Council and its secretariat for the next two years. The Ministers' recommendations on these items appear in Chapter III, Sections C and D of this report.

CHAPTER III

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A. Organization of Work

72. In view of its experience last year, the Council returned to its former procedure and appointed two representatives from each regional group to draft its conclusions and recommendations. The drafting group consisted of Argentina, Australia, China, Colombia, German Democratic Republic, Germany (Federal Republic of), Guinea, Somalia, Thailand, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and United States of America.

73. After minor amendments, the conclusions and recommendations submitted by the drafting group were adopted by consensus.

74. The Council proclaimed the Beijing Declaration which was read by Mr. He Kang, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fishery of the People's Republic of China, to unanimous acclaim.

75. In conclusion, representatives from the five regional groups paid warm tribute to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China for their generous hospitality in hosting the session, as well as for the success that China has achieved in solving the food problem for its vast population. Ministers also congratulated the newly-elected President of the Council, Mr. Eduardo Pesqueira Olea, and his Bureau and wished them success in leading the Council during their two-year term.

76. The delegate of Cyprus extended an invitation to the Council to hold its fourteenth ministerial session in his country.

B. Election of Officers

77. Following the expiry of the term of office of the existing Bureau, the following officers were elected to serve the Council for the period June 1987 to June 1989. President: Mr. Eduardo Pesqueira Olea, Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources of Mexico; Vice-Presidents: Mr. Abdirizak Mohamoud Abubakar, Minister of Agriculture of Somalia; Mr. Mats Hellstrom, Minister of Agriculture of Sweden; Mr. M. Ibrahim Baluch, Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture of Pakistan; and M. Yovtcho Roussev, Vice-Minister, Director-General, Hranexport State Company of Bulgaria.

78. The Council paid tribute to the outgoing Bureau for having served the Council with distinction during the past two years. Ministers and heads of delegations warmly thanked Mr. Henri Nallet, the outgoing President, for his able leadership which had contributed significantly to the success of the thirteenth session.

C. Views and Proposals for Submission to the Economic and Social Council Special Commission for an In-depth Study of the Intergovernmental Structure in the Economic and Social Field

79. The Executive Director recalled that in February 1987 the Economic and Social Council established a Special Commission on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields. The study was a follow-up to Recommendation 8 of the Group of the High-level Intergovernmental Experts (the Group of 18) whose objectives were to:

(a) identify measures to rationalize and simplify the intergovernmental structure, avoid duplication and consider consolidating and co-ordinating overlapping activities and merging existing bodies in order to improve their work and make the structure more responsive to present needs;

(b) develop criteria for the establishment and duration of subsidiary bodies, including periodic reviews of their work and mechanism for implementing their decisions;

(c) define in precise terms areas of responsibility for the various bodies. Particular attention should be given to strengthening the coherence and integrity of the structure, to facilitating the formulation of a comprehensive approach to development issues and to the necessity of putting more emphasis on regional and subregional co-operation;

(d) consider the establishment of a single governing body responsible for the management and control, at the intergovernmental level, of United Nations operational activities for development;

(e) strengthen on a continuing basis the co-ordination of activities in the economic and social fields under the leadership of the Secretary-General.

80. In their response to this item, Ministers recommended to the Special Commission that in its deliberations it should take into account the fact that:

- The World Food Council of the United Nations is the highest political body in the United Nations system dealing with food. It reviews and recommends remedial action on major problems or policy issues affecting all aspects of the world food situation.

- The Council maintains contacts with, receives reports from, gives advice to and makes recommendations to United Nations bodies and agencies with regard to the formulation and follow up of world food policies. In brief, the World Food Council is an overall ministerial level policy body, not an operational one. The other United Nations bodies concerned with food, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, are all operational in character; consequently their activities do not duplicate those of the World Food Council.

- The World Food Council has no subsidiary bodies itself but would certainly encourage improved reporting and less duplication of documentation.

81. Ministers also recalled with approval the recommendations of the Advisory Group which had been appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and had submitted its report to the Council last year. Ministers were unanimous in their support of the Council retaining its own independent identity as a political body for addressing food and hunger issues. They emphasized that its mandate could not be fulfilled if the Council were to be merged with, or its functions taken over by, another United Nations body.

D. Future Programme of the Council

(a) The next biennium: 1988-1989.

82. Ministers agreed that during the biennium 1988-1989, the Council should consolidate its earlier initiatives and seek to advance more effective approaches towards meeting its central objective of eliminating hunger and malnutrition. The activities concerned would fall into three broad categories: (i) follow-up on earlier Council initiatives including the nutritional impact of economic adjustment policies; agricultural trade and South-South co-operation; the promotion of national and regional food strategies; and the follow-up of the Beijing recommendations (ii) new items on the Council's agenda, including the initiation of a multi-year programme of systematic assessment of experience with policies and programmes for hunger and poverty reduction, and ecological issues (iii) continuation of a range of activities now commonly regarded as a normal part of the secretariat's work, e.g. the monitoring of programmes for the elimination of hunger and malnutrition; food strategies; external aid and the activities of transnational corporations in the field of food and agriculture.

83. Ministers were emphatic that the Council's role was to monitor, review and co-ordinate food and food-related policies of various agencies; to assess and analyse their consequences on hunger and malnutrition, and to tender appropriate advice to agencies and governments. Care was needed to ensure that the Council's programme of work did not duplicate the operational activities of competent United Nations bodies.

84. Ministers emphasized that the Council's secretariat should not overburden itself with a work programme that was too ambitious, nor overload the Council's ministerial agenda. It was necessary to select one or two key items on which to focus consultations during each ministerial session. This practice would facilitate ministerial dialogue and make it easier than at present to reach agreement on the conclusions and recommendations.

(b) The Proposed Medium-Term Plan: 1990-1995

85. Ministers approved the Draft Outline of the Medium-Term Plan 1990-1995, as presented by the Executive Director in Annex I of Document WFC/1987/10.

86. Referring to the period 1990-1995, they particularly stressed the need to maintain flexibility, since the political issues the Council might be called upon to deal with were both complex and not easily foreseeable.

87. Ministers observed that the continuing increase in the number of the world's hungry and malnourished was testimony to the fact that past efforts to eliminate hunger and malnutrition had failed. One of the Council's responsibilities should be to probe the causes of that failure and propose remedies. The Council must review the hunger-related activities of United Nations agencies and assess their impact. The Council's secretariat should prepare documentation along these lines for ministerial consideration.

88. Ministers and heads of delegations had throughout the meeting been thanking Minister He Kang and his co-workers for the outstanding hospitality that had been given to the World Food Council. Toward the end of the meeting they adopted the following expression of gratitude:

Expression of gratitude to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China

The World Food Council,

Having convened its thirteenth ministerial session at Beijing from 8 to 11 June 1987 at the kind invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China,

1. Expresses its deep appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China for the outstanding generosity and warmth of welcome extended to all the Ministers, plenipotentiaries and other representatives and observers participating at the session;

2. Applauds the Government and people of China for the excellent conference facilities and other arrangements provided to all participants and for the success of those efforts;

3. Requests the President of the Council to express, on behalf of all the members and observers participating at the session, its deep gratitude to the President of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Li Xian Nian and, through him, to the Government and people of China.

ANNEX

List of documents before the Council at its thirteenth ministerial session

Document number	Agenda Item	Title
WFC/1987/1	1	Provisional agenda with annotations
WFC/1987/2	3	The Global State of Hunger and Malnutrition and the Impact of Economic Adjustment on Food and Hunger Problems
WFC/1987/2/Add.1	3	Consultation on the Impact of Economic Adjustment on People's Food Security and Nutritional Levels in Developing Countries
WFC/1987/3	4	The Impact of International Agricultural Trade and Related National Policies on Food and Development
WFC/1987/4	5	Regional Co-operation and South-South Co-operation in Food and Agriculture
WFC/1987/4/Add.1	5	Regional Co-operation and South-South Co-operation in Food and Agriculture - Addendum
WFC/1987/5	6	Selected Activities of Multilateral Assistance Agencies in Relation to Hunger Reduction
WFC/1987/6		Current World Food Situation
WFC/1987/7		Report of the Twelfth Session of the Committee on World Food Security
WFC/1987/8		Twelfth Annual Report of the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes
WFC/1987/9	2	Candidature of Mexico for the Presidency of the World Food Council
WFC/1987/10	7	Future Programme of the Council and Other Business
WFC/1987/NGO/1		Statement by the Ad Hoc Group of Representatives in Rome of International Non-Governmental Organizations
WFC/1987/NGO/2		Statement of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers
WFC/1987/NGO/3		Toward More Effective Efforts to Combat Hunger and Malnutrition: A Non-Governmental Organization Perspective

WFC/1987/L.1	Organization of work
WFC/1987/INF/1	Membership of the World Food Council in 1987
WFC/1987/INF/2	Information for participants
WFC/1987/INF/3	List of participants at the thirteenth ministerial session of the Council
WFC/1987/INF/4	List of documents before the thirteenth ministerial session of the Council